

Even Heroes Need a Little Help by daughterofeve16

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Summary: The Party pauses to take care of their new-found friend. Or, because we're all wondering how Steve ended up with that rainbow Band-aid. Takes place during Season 2, Episode 9: The Gate. One-shot.

Even Heroes Need a Little Help

A/N: This idea has been bouncing around in my head for a while. This is my take on what could have happened in the time between Steve getting knocked out at the Byers' and waking up in Billy's Camaro. All credit goes to Netflix and the Duffer Brothers.

Dustin was not used to people standing up for him and his friends. For years they had just been "The Nerds." Toothless. Midnight. Frogface. It never occurred to him that maybe, just maybe, someone would be willing to stick up for his band of misfits. He certainly never expected this in the form of Steve Harrington. But nevertheless, Steve had faced the Party's threat head-on (literally—Dustin could see the bump forming where Billy had head-butted him) and while he may not have slayed the beast, he certainly put up a good fight. Outside of Eleven, that was the most anyone had ever done for his friends. And now in front of him, Dustin's new hero lay sprawled on the Byers' floor, unmoving. Dustin did not want to admit how much that scared him, so instead he figured he'd try to make the situation better. He cautiously approached the unconscious teenager.

"Hey, hey Steve? Can you open your eyes?" Dustin asked. Dustin placed a hand on Steve's shoulder. The teenager remained immobile but groaned a bit, hopefully indicating that he was at least semiconscious.

Mike's presence made itself known. "Maybe we should get a pillow under his head?" he suggested.

"Good idea." Lucas grabbed a pillow from the Byers' couch. He carefully lifted Steve's head and slid it underneath him. The teen winced.

"Steve, you awake?" Dustin wondered.

"Mmmmm," Steve responded. Close enough.

"We're going to try to clean you up, okay?" Dustin explained.

"Mmmhmmm." The kids weren't entirely convinced that Steve knew what was going on, but they took his response as permission.

"Mike, go grab the first aid kit from the bathroom. Max, go wet a towel in the kitchen." Dustin was taking charge. The fact that neither one complained about their duties revealed how concerned they truly were. The two hurried off to their respective places. In the meantime, Dustin and Lucas tried to figure out the best place to start.

"Maybe we should clean up his nose first? There's a lot of blood," Lucas pointed out.

"Good call," Dustin responded. He leaned closer to the fallen teenager, inspecting Steve's beaten face. "Do you think anything is broken?"

"I don't think so. We'll know more once the blood is gone." Lucas responded. After a minute, their two friends returned with the necessary supplies.

"Alright, who has the gentlest hands?" Dustin wondered.

"What the hell kind of question is that?" Max demanded.

"We need somebody who isn't going to hurt him worse," Dustin explained. There was a brief pause as the kids contemplated.

"Uhhh... Max does. She's a girl so... yeah," Lucas put in. Max scoffed.

"What are you insinuating, Stalker?" Max's voice had a dangerous edge.

"I'm just saying..." Lucas countered. He threw his hands in front of him defensively.

"Guys...", came Dustin's voice.

"Just because I'm a girl that means..."

"Guys!" Dustin's voice sliced through their conversation. He nodded towards Steve, who had brought a hand up to his head.

"Sh' up," he slurred. "Hur's." Max and Lucas looked apologetic.

"Sorry, Steve," Lucas said.

"Let's help you feel better, okay buddy?" Dustin coaxed. Steve let his hand drop to his side. Max knelt beside him, apparently determining that she was best suited for this job after all.

"We were thinking maybe cleaning up his nose first? Since it has the most blood?" Dustin offered. Max nodded. Her hands were steady as she approached Steve's face, but on the inside, she was screaming. While she knew that ultimately this was Billy's fault, she couldn't help but feel guilty. After all, Billy had come looking for her. Steve was just trying to protect her, Lucas, and the others. Max never expected the issue to escalate so quickly. She was just glad Mrs. Byers had left out the drug. Otherwise, Steve would likely be—no, she wasn't going to think like that.

"I'm going to touch your face now, Steve. Is that okay?" Max wondered. Steve grunted but didn't say no, so she decided to go for it. She gently pressed the towel to the skin around Steve's nose, careful to avoid touching it. She swiped the towel to the right, shuddering at the amount of blood now staining the fabric. Steve's only reaction was blinking a couple of times. Max wasn't sure if that was a good thing or a bad thing. After a couple of minutes most of the blood had been cleaned up. Luckily, no new blood appeared to be leaking out. Max took careful inventory of the rest of Steve's injuries. He had a decent-sized cut on his chin and a matching one on the right side of his forehead, likely where Billy had head-butted him. That area was also beginning to swell.

"Dustin, get something cold to put on his head. We need to get the swelling down," Max directed.

"On it!" Dustin exclaimed, disappearing into the kitchen. In his absence, Max cleaned away the blood from Steve's chin. Then she moved to his forehead.

"Sorry if this hurts," she apologized. She pressed the towel to the cut. Steve winced and clenched his teeth. More blood continued to escape the wound.

"Mike, I need a Band-Aid," she stated. Mike reached into the first aid kit and pulled out a box.

"Uhhh... they're all kid-ish. It's rainbows and stuff," he explained. Max raised her eyebrows at him.

"Do you really think Steve is going to care? Look at him!" Max exclaimed. The kids all looked down at the teenager. Steve seemed to be aware of all the kids' stares.

"Why lookin' a' me?" Steve slurred. He caught sight of the towel Max was holding. "'s that blood? Fro' me?" He tried to touch his forehead.

"No, Steve. That'll make it worse." Lucas took Steve's hand and placed it back on the floor. Steve stared blankly at Lucas. At this point, the kids were fairly certain Steve wasn't all there quite yet.

"Just give me a Band-aid," Max said. Mike handed her over a couple. She placed one on Steve's chin and one on his forehead. Steve tried to swat her hand away when she applied pressure to his head, but Lucas quickly held him down. At that moment Dustin returned with an icepack.

"Here you go, buddy. This'll help you feel better," Dustin coaxed. He placed the pack on Steve's forehead. The teen gave no reaction, and his eyes were closed. "You still with us, Steve?" Steve didn't respond. Dustin was alarmed at how quickly his friend had faded from consciousness, but since he got his ass handed to him a few minutes ago, he figured Steve deserved a little rest now that he was cleaned up.

"We need to get moving," Mike informed them.

"Yeah, but we can't just leave Steve!" Dustin exclaimed.

"Seriously? He'll lose his shit when he finds out Max is driving," Mike declared.

"He'll be fine! And we are *not* leaving him here with Billy." Dustin's words left no room for argument. There was silence for a moment.

"I agree with Dustin," Lucas put in. Three sets of eyes stared at him.

"Steve... he saved my life. As far as I'm concerned, he's one of us now." Dustin smiled a large, toothy grin.

"Yeah!"

"I think he should come, too. We could use extra help in the tunnels. Plus, we should probably keep an eye on him. He looks pretty pathetic right now," Max stated.

"Okay, okay! But how are we going to get him into the car?" Mike asked. The four paused for a moment, contemplating.

"I have an idea!" Dustin rushed out of the room. He returned a few seconds later pushing an office chair on wheels. "It's Jonathan's. Think it'll work?"

"We won't know until we try. Let's do it," Lucas said.

"Alright, bring it over," Mike sighed. Dustin wheeled it beside Steve.

"Lucas, hold the chair steady. I'll get under his arms. Mike, you get under his legs. Max, take the icepack and prepare for extra support should we need assistance. Everybody got it?" Dustin explained.

"Aye aye, captain," Lucas agreed.

"Okay, we'll lift him on three. Get in position!" Dustin hooked his arms under Steve's shoulders while Mike scooped his arms under Steve's knees. Max removed the icepack and Lucas braced the chair.

"Ready? One, two, three!" As one, the middle schoolers hefted Steve off the ground and maneuvered him into the office chair. The lanky teen began to slump over, but Dustin caught his shoulder.

"Whoa, buddy. Let's keep you upright," Dustin said.

"Alright, let's get him to the car. Max, you have the keys?" Lucas questioned. She dangled them in front of his face in response. "Okay. Operation Tunnel Transport is a go!" Lucas began to push the office chair forward, causing Steve to slide down.

"Hey, wait!" Dustin yelled, gripping Steve's arm. He pulled the

teenager into a better position. "Pushing him will just make him fall. Since he's not awake, he won't be able to keep himself up. We'll have to pull him."

"Good point," Lucas stated, swiveling Steve around. Lucas gripped the backrest of the chair and tilted it backwards so it was propped up on two wheels. He slowly began to pull Steve along.

"Man, Steve would so kill us if he knew what was going on right now," Dustin declared.

"He's already working on killing me. Would it hurt him to lay off the burgers? This guy is heavy," Lucas stated. The other kids cracked a smile at that.

"Steve's going to be okay, right?" Dustin asked no one in particular. Lucas stopped pulling the chair. The four looked down at the injured teen, taking in his cuts, bumps, and bruises.

"He'll be fine, Dustin. He probably won't be going on dates anytime soon with that face, but that should be the biggest of his worries," Mike stated. Dustin whacked him upside the head.

"Seriously man? I'm trying to be real here and you give me that?" Dustin shook his head.

"Hey! I'm sorry, sheesh. He'll be fine. Soon he's going to wake up for real, probably lose his shit, and then help us out. We've just got to get him there first."

"Okay, let's keep moving," Max suggested. The team made it out the doorway with little issue. Maneuvering through the grass and gravel, though, proved more difficult. Not once, but twice the office chair got stuck on a rock and nearly pitched Steve out. Luckily Dustin was there to throw out an arm and keep the teenager upright.

"We're at the car, now what?" Mike asked.

"We get him in, idiot," Dustin responded. Mike rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, I think I know that," Mike said.

"Seriously guys? Not the time for that," Max cut through their conversation. She opened the door to Billy's Camaro and pushed the front seat forward.

"Mike, how about you get in first. Lucas and I will hold him up, then we'll pass him on to you, and you can just... drag him in?" Dustin shrugged.

"It's a good thing he's unconscious for this," was all Mike said as he climbed into the backseat. Dustin and Lucas each slung one of Steve's arms over their shoulders. Max removed the chair from underneath Steve and he ended up in an awkward squatting position with one knee buckled beneath him and the other leg sprawled forward.

"Mike, grab his armpits!" Dustin declared.

"Eww, no!" Mike refused.

"Mike!" The middle schoolers yelled in unison.

"Fine, fine," Mike conceded. He reached under Steve's shoulders and the two other boys let go. Dustin lifted Steve's legs and somehow they squashed the teen into the vehicle, lanky legs and all. Dustin crawled in after him and resituated the teenager so he was leaning back in the seat with his head resting on Dustin's shoulder.

"Max? Icepack," Dustin called. The redhead tossed it back at him. He held it to Steve's head. Steve remained unconscious. Dustin sighed as Max climbed into the driver's seat.

"So, guys? There might be a problem..." she explained.

"What's wrong?" Lucas asked.

"I can't reach the gas pedal," Max admitted.

"You what?!" the boys exclaimed in unison.

"You heard me!" Her voice sounded angry, but it cracked at the end, like she was ready to cry.

"Sit tight; I have an idea," Lucas declared. He scrambled out of the

car. After a minute he returned carrying a wood block, presumably taken from the Byers' backyard. "Try this." Max stuck the block on the pedal.

"It's perfect, Stalker. Thanks," she said. Lucas smiled.

"You're welcome. Now let's get out of here!" Max turned the key in the ignition, revving up the engine. She threw it in reverse and hit the gas. The kids were immediately slammed backwards as she accelerated too quickly. She pressed the brakes.

"Holy shit, Max," Dustin cursed. He heard Steve groan beside him, but other than that the teen didn't stir.

"Sorry, guys. I've got it now." She eased the car into reverse and turned the car around. Soon they were on the road. The kids attempted to relax into the seats. Dustin took a moment to readjust Steve's position. He'd been jostled a bit after Max's... rough start. He caught Mike watching him.

"He looks like shit." Mike pointed out. Dustin observed the unconscious teenager. His lip was swollen, his nose was bruised, and both eyes were turning black. Dustin understood why Mike had made such a claim. Steve did look worse for the wear, but in Dustin's eyes the teen was sporting battle scars. Steve kicked major ass today, and while most of it had been his own, the gesture had not gone unnoticed. Dustin would make it up to him somehow, but for now he settled on making sure Steve got the credit he deserved.

"No, Mike. He looks like a hero."

A/N: Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed this little story. I tried to reflect the personalities of each character, especially Dustin. Please leave a review; I'd love to hear your thoughts! :)